

[R. L. Anderson]

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by

Mrs. Florence Angermiller

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Pioneer Reminiscences and

Cowboy Tales of Early Days UVALDE COUNTY, DISTRICT #10

R. L. ANDERSON

Uvalde Texas

R. L. Anderson declares that he does not believe in trying to get [???] he would not have his picture taken expressly for a news paper [??]. Neither would he approve of a lot of junk written about his cowboy [??] he went up the trail, for it looked like a person was trying to [??] for what was only an ordinary thing in [??] days. "Just like [?] Old Trail-Driver Association," he added. "It looks a little silly [?]." But then, he is only 74 years old.

However [??] up on the subject of the early days when the methods of handling [?] were no different, he became a genial, laughing, old son [??] and though he vowed that he didn't "know much to tell," I found that [??] and the following account is in his own words:

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"I don't know when my people first came to Texas. I think they discovered it [?] anyway, they were living in [Eatagorde?] County during the Mexican [?]. [?] would get word down there that the Mexicans were [?] and all the [?] would go east til things would [??] again. After the [?] parents lived on St Joseph's Island, then at Gonzales.

"I left [?] so early I was never around my people much. I guess I was [?] for [?] years old when I first left home. I left horseback with old [??]. I went with him to take a herd of cattle up in north Texas [?] locate a ranch. They finally stopped up there in Runnels 2 County. I [?] that job for fifteen dollars a month and rode an old, wild mule. [?] Man Parimore had this mule along and as I was light he wanted me [??] him. It would take two or three men to hold him for me to get on. And then he would run two or three miles before he played out. I had [?] horse and saddle of my own and a regular outfit of leggins and [??] on. That mule would always run till he gave out then I would have [?] worry with his dragging along. I spurred him so much it made a [?] and old man Parimore saw that, and told me I had to doctor the mule. [?] mule kicked my hat off but they made me doctor him. There were about [?]-five hundred head of cattle on that trip. [?] had our wagon, horses and men along, and after we got the cattle located, I came back to [??] and went to school some more.

"I left [?] next morning— the spring of 1880. We took about 3,000 head of cattle [?] Panhandle. I was with J. C. Houston on that trip. We had a Negro [?] along and he had a [?] fixed under the wagon for wood and such-[?]. A [?] is a hide stretched under a wagon to carry things in. Most [?] had these rawhide [?] in those days. On long trips in that country where wood was so scarce, the cook always got every piece of wood he could find as he went along, and put it in that [?] so that he would have a supply when he struck camp. These [?] were used for other things besides wood too.

"It [?] about a couple of months or a little longer to make that drive. The cattle were the old-time longhorns. Their horns usually measured [?] feet or so across. There were several herds of Houston's that met, [?] around old Fort Griffin. There must have been twelve or

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fourteen-thousand head in that round-up. They cut out the steers and took them on to [?]. Then we took the stock cattle on to the ranch that Houston had started on the North Pease River right between the Pease and 3 the Red River. That ranch was as big as the all-out-doors. Nobody owned any land in those days much. And we got there with about five-thousand head of cattle. I put in about three years there, and there was two years I never saw a woman's face. We hauled our supplies from Old Fort Griffin [?]-hundred and fifty miles below us. Some of the freighters had ox-[?] and some used horses for freighting. We would send down there [?] flour and coffee. We always had plenty of good beef. They used to [?] to a certain store as there was a mail line from Fort Griffin [?]. They could send a letter down for a supplies and the merchant would send them out by the freighters. We would get [green?] coffee in [?] hundred pound sacks. No, we never had anything sweet, no sugar, not even molasses. We learned not to carry molasses in the wagon after [?] stopper blew out of the jug once and got molasses all over the [?] and every thing else.

"I [?] one in those line camps most of the time. We lived in a dugout. I [?] supposed to be by myself but the other fellow was boss and he [??] out and be gone several days at a time. I was about sixteen and [?] course, I had to stay. The only way I had of entertaining myself [??] night — I had me a skunk pole made out of wild China. There were [?] skunks there than any place I ever saw in my life, and I would [?] there at night and thrash skunks. One night the boss was there [?] got after a skunk and he run in the dugout. Mathis began ['hollering,'] trying to get him out but the old skunk just kept coming [??] in. And of all the commotion nd yelling , it took place then. He [finally?] got his gun and killed him and we had skunk all spring. We generally [?] beef hanging up out side and that seemed to be what drew them.

"When [??] a notion to go back to see my mother there were three 4 of us. [?] Parke, Milton Fly, and my self started for Gonzales horseback. [?] one horse apiece and mine played out in about twelve mile of Gonzales. He was an old range-horse ad wouldn't eat a bit of grain. Lots of them won't eat grain until they are taught. I left my horse at [?] and

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someone brought him down to me, but I didn't ride him back. [?] my first train back. I went to Albany , about ten or twelve miles [?] Fort Griffin, and we took a [?] from there.

“There [?] two Houston brothers: J. D. who branded the NN and the Houston [?] who was partner with Lemons and branded T41.

“I [??] till February '83, when they sold the ranch out to the [??] Company. The last winter I was there, they left us there to [?] charge of it till they got the money for it. They sold out for [?] and got it in cash. I forget how much they paid when the deal was closed. Then they had to wait about a week for the balance of it.

“I came back down to Gonzales then and we started back up the trail again in [?] with a heard of steers. We gathered those steers down there and drove them to [Lamnesas?]. We had along about a hundred head of horses. The herd we [?] with was to go to Kansas. But they had bought two more herds of over [?]-thousand head, and we waited there til they came up. Then they [took?] our herd of steers and went on to Kansas from [Lemnesas?] which was the old Dodge city Trail. And we took their herd and went on to the [?]. We cross over into the Pecos River [?] County and established a ranch there [?] the NA ranch. That was north of Fort tockton toward Pecos City. [?] was all open range there also.

“I was [??] old vaquero making about thirty dollars then. There were four of [?] boys and we bought cattle when we first went out there. We worked [??] ranch but w had our own brand. We moved part of our 5 cattle down to the Henry Packerham ranch to the rough part of the Pecos River country. We stayed there with Henry Packerham about a year. He had a ceder-picket house covered with grass, and we flew in there and helped him put up another room. He had a room about twelve or thirteen feet high and he had an old beef hide stretched up in the top of the room for sort of a ceiling. He told me how the hide came there. He said he had an old steer that got to leading his cattle off and he said one day he found him with a bunch of his cattle way up on one of those high peaks. So he just

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killed the steer and skinned him, and drove the cattle on back. I used to cow hunt with Packerham. He later bought a big ranch down on Independence Draw. He was a mighty good man. There was nothing unusual about his appearance; about average height and rather dark complected. He had lived alone much of the time and I have seen him sit for hours and never say a word.

"When we first started up the NA ranch we only had a little old 'dobe shack but we built a four-room lumber house in about a year after we got there. We drove our beeves to Kansas in the spring. Beeves never sold by the pound then, just by the head. I now one heard we drove, we got fifteen-fifty a head for them - they were aged longhorns, some of them twelve years old. They would average around nine-hundred and fifty pounds, I suppose. But if they had been fat, some of them would have weighed twelve or thirteen-hundred pounds. I stayed on that ranch until 1895, but I had sold out to my partners down at Packerham's and bought an interest in the Houston ranch about 1890. In about 1893, I took a herd of beeves up the trail to Kansas. The herds were getting smaller then for the country was getting all fenced up and it was lots of trouble to get those big herds through. Our ranch was about twenty-five miles of Fort Stockton and after I took the cattle on the trail and came back, 6 we came in north of Fort Stockton on the Santa [?] Creek. When we got to town, they were going to have a picnic down at the Sam Bayler ranch, so I decided to go. I met Miss Mary Crosby on that trip. We were married in 1894. We lived in Fort stockton Stockton a little while and then I went up the trail the following year again. I went to Amarillo with a herd and sold them to a fellow named General Maud. He was an Englishman and had a big ranch in that country. He was the same General Maud who went back to England when the World War broke out and helped [Allembey?] capture Palestine. He and his folks out there on that ranch were typically English. They had a big outfit there and spent lots of money on that ranch. Of all the trips up the trail, that rip was the hardest one. There had come a storm just before we started and all the windmills had been blown down and it was difficult to find water anywhere. After I watered the herd at the Pecos River and started out across the plains, there was a fellow followed me and told me

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about the scarcity of water and said unless we turned and went by his ranch, we wouldn't get water at all. After we turned off, we never could get started back the other way. We cut across the corner of New Mexico to the LFD ranch and got water there. This outfit heard about us being in there with a herd and as they were old friends of mine, they sent one of their men to come pilot us through the country. They killed a calf for us and treated us pretty fine while we were there.

"We struck the Capital Syndicate Ranch then and it was fenced up worse than any I ever saw and they wouldn't let us through there at all. We turned south to Lubbock and got supplies there. There was a store, blacksmith shop and maybe a half-dozen houses. The merchant didn't have any bacon for me and had to send to another town for it. We were glad to stay there for awhile because there was water. I had been riding two or three horses down every day hunting water for the herd, so while the merchant sent for the bacon we needed, we stayed close in and waited. Even then, a fellow tried to run me off as we had the cattle on his ranch close to the town. I told him I would sure stay there and fight him for a day or two. As he was an old cowpuncher he saw the condition and said he didn't blame me.

"We had about eight or ten hands in the outfit and one wagon and those old steers stampeded every night on that trip. And about the worst stampede I ever had was right on that trip. They sure did run.

"Maud wouldn't take the cattle unless I would agree to take the herd up to the ranch. Now we hadn't had any rain on us from the time we left the Pecos till we got up there and the night we started to Maud's ranch, the cattle began running. They run all night long. It was in the 'shinnery' and that is an awful bad place to bed cattle as there is so much to scare 'em. But we stayed with 'em and I don't think that we lost but about four head. The next day, I was out about a couple of miles from the wagon with a herd. There was an awful good cowman with me on that trip and we held things together pretty well. The cattle were

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in about [?] or bunches but we got them all back together again. I never pulled off my boots once till after we delivered those cattle and branded 'em out.

“Coming back from Kansas one time, we were bringing the horses and wagon back and were coming overland. We had one boy with us in the outfit goin up the territory and he was always talking about the Indians trying to stampede the cattle and what he would do with one. About the last night we were going to stay in the territory we were camped one night and of course we kept the horses under herd. I had a Mexican outfit along and one of the mexicans was going to go wake this fellow up to stand guard. Well, I let the fellow go out there and I took the Mexican and went out around the herd and as it was pretty dark, we laid 8 down on our horses and went riding around the herd of horses so this fellow would see us. He was standing by his horse fixing his saddle and when he saw us, he began looking suspicious and stepped up on his horse. We yelled and made a run for him. He didn't know what to do so he ran right toward us. When he passed us, we turned and took after him and run him right into the wagon. The Mexican at the wagon thought it was Indians, of course, and they really scattered. I finally caught his horse by the bridle before he recognized me. Then he saw who it was, he knew why I had done it but I told him I just took after him to see what on earth was the matter with him.

“In those days when a cowboy went to town, there was absolutely no place for him to go unless he went to the saloon. Once, in Pecos City I went into a saloon and there was an outlaw, Clay Allison , in the saloon. I was sitting down and he came over and put his foot up in my lap and there was nothing for me to do, but to hold his foot. I was just a kid and he was an older man and he was as bad a man as there was in those days.

“I knew John esley Hardin too. I was just a kid when he was doing all his meanness but he went to the pen and stayed for fifteen years and when he got out he came back to Gonzales and started practicing law. He got into another row with the sheriff and had to leave. He took up the ministry after that.

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"Sheriff Morris of Pecos City was a bad one but they killed him. Gene Miller was an outlaw too and killed another sheriff there by the name of Bud Frazier. Frazier was sheriff at Pecos City for a long time but he waylaid Miller and shot him through the arm but Miller got his pistol out and started for Frazier but Frazier ran clear away. The second time Frazier tried to get 'im, it turned out about the same way. Frazier quit the office later and went up to Toyah and one day, he came into town and was in a 9 poker game. Somebody went down to Pecos City and told Miller where Frazier was and Miller got a shot-gun and went up to Toyah and went to the place where Frazier was. He pushed open the door with his gun and shot Frazier's head off. He had killed several men up to that time and after that he killed two or three more.

"About 1895 we moved form Fort Stockton to Midland. I bought a home in town and leased the UL ranch from Mrs. Hoxey. It was about seventy-thousand acres. Then we began to raise white-faced cattle. We ranched there about ten years. Our two children, Roberts and Dunn, were born there.

"I sold out to Nels Morris, the old packer. They gathered that seventy-thousand acre pasture — everything in it — and turned it over, paid for it and put the money in the bank in one day. It's all open country up there. When we were gathering cattle, I bought me a barrel of bells and when I'd catch one of those old outlaw steers, I'd bell him. I told the boys, 'Now, when you hear one of those bells, you stay with him till you get a rope on him.' You'd hear bells ringing all times of the day and night. Sometimes you'd see an old boy take out after a steer and maybe run him nearly down, but he'd stay with him till he caught him. Tom White, who camped with us on the Pecos and helped start up the old NA brand , was living in Midland and when I was rounding up, he came out and helped me sell it out. He said he helped start the brand and he was going to help sell it out. Old Nels Morris' ranch was joining me and he sent a man over to buy some cows off of me. This fellow was Morris' foreman but I didn't know it. He said he wanted to buy some cows to take to Kansas. I wouldn't sell them to him. I told him I was going to sell all those cattle to Old Nels

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Morris. Well, Norris' men came down and looked at the cattle and they phoned me back that they wanted the cattle and wanted them delivered Monday. That was Saturday. We rounded the cattle up and had them there Monday. That ended 10 the Houston-Anderson partnership. I had been with Houston since I was sixteen years old, and I was forty then.

“After our land was sold and the cattle disposed of, we came to Uvalde. Old man Houston had three or four places spotted around Uvalde for me to look at. I looked at the Mangum, Vanham and Woodley ranches but they weren't what I wanted. I struck Tom Ramsey here from Oregon. I knew him on the Pecos and he told me not to leave so soon as there was lots of good country around here so he called up [Chinn?] who was a real estate dealer then. He showed me the old [?] end west ranch on the Nuecos owned by [ill?] May. It just suited me in every way and I bought it. I kept it twenty-one years and finally Hammer Johnson sold it for me to Frank Andrews for the Humble Oil Company. We moved to Uvalde in 1911 and have been here ever since.

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